



Motya, a Phoenician Colony in Sicily by Joseph I. S. Whitaker

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Recent excavations at Caere and Veii have shown that in the sixth century not the tombs only but the temples also were adorned with paintings; so far it is uncertain whether they were employed as interior decoration or as painted metopes like those of the temple at Thermon. These temple paintings are outside the strict field of Dr. Poulsen's book, but to any student of Etruscan art they are likely to form so important a factor that we must hope for their speedy publication. They are, unfortunately, much damaged, but in almost every case they seem to consist of an almost square slab representing a group of two figures, usually scenes of warriors. Probably they illustrated episodes noted in legend or history and were therefore the forerunners of the Roman historical paintings of the Republican period, such as those limned by Fabius Pictor in 304 B.C. in the Temple of Salus, a copy of which is most likely preserved in the famous fresco fragment in the *Museo dei Conservatori*.

E. DOUGLAS VAN BUREN.

MOTYA, A PHOENICIAN COLONY IN SICILY. By Joseph I. S. WHITAKER. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 6, xvi + 358 pp., coloured frontispiece, 116 illustrations, 9 maps and plans. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1921. 3os. n.

Motya is a site of unique interest, in that it is perhaps the only Phoenician city the site of which has remained desolate in later times. The other two great Phoenician colonies in western Sicily, Solous and Panormus, lived on into Roman times: and the latter is still the capital of the island. But the history of Motya practically closes with its destruction by Dionysius of Syracuse in 397 B.C., and neither from ancient authors nor from the excavations which have been carried on there can any evidence of its occupation as a town in later times be obtained. Lilybaeum, on the mainland, took its place completely, and has survived as the modern town of Marsala. Motya did not even, as so often happened to the ancient cities of Italy, become the site of the country residence of some wealthy Roman. It is thus of very great importance archaeologically; and Mr. Whitaker deserves the gratitude of all students of antiquity for the work that he has done there, and for the full description of it that he has given in the present work.

The first part is historical, dealing with the Phoenicians in general and in Sicily and at Motya in particular; while the second describes fully what has so far been discovered at Motya. Previous excavations have amounted to very little, and the site may be said to have remained practically untouched until Mr. Whitaker at length realised a long-cherished ambition, and became the sole owner of the little island. So far, as the general plan will show, the whole line of the walls has been investigated, and the complicated system of fortifications at the north gate has been carefully studied. This gate, to which led the causeway connecting Motya with the mainland, required exceptionally strong defensive works, which are of very great interest. A small internal harbour, or *cothon*, a basin measuring about 165 by 120 feet, connected with the sea by a channel over 20 feet wide, has also been cleared out. The buildings which have so far been excavated within the walls are few. They include a house with a Doric peristyle, containing an exceptionally interesting mosaic pavement carried out in coloured pebbles, with panels representing combats between animals—a lion advancing towards a horse in one, a lion seizing a bull in another, and a griffin attacking a horse or stag in a third. Such elaborate designs do not appear to be known elsewhere at such an early period.

The cemeteries are of exceptional importance. The earliest is a cremation necropolis, dated by the discovery of numerous proto-Corinthian vases to 750–650 B.C. They are associated with Phoenician pottery precisely similar to that which occurs in the early tombs of the cemeteries of Douimès, Dermech and Dar et Mourali at Carthage.¹

¹ Compare also Gauckler, *Necropoles puniques de Carthage*, i, 103, 205, 209 (tombs 232, 431—the latter not fully described—and pls. cliii, clxxii); ii, 411; and Anziani's remarks in the introduction, p. xvii.

Cremation was perhaps adopted at Motya owing to lack of space—not owing to Greek influence; for, as Mr. Whitaker points out, as soon as the necropolis was transferred to Birgi, on the mainland, in the sixth century B.C., inhumation became the almost universal practice. But both on the island and on the mainland there is a period of transition: on the former a small group of sarcophagi has been discovered, in one of which a Greek black-figured vase was found, and in another a black kylix, both associated with the usual Phoenician pottery (compare pp. 246, 247 with p. 312, fig. 88, and p. 314); while on the mainland a few cremation tombs were found near the shore. The chronological succession between the two could hardly be better documented. More recently a burial-ground for the remains of animals offered in sacrifice—lambs, kids, calves, dogs, cats, etc.—and even of a few human infants, has come to light. The urns are undecorated, and are surmounted by stelae. A few coins have been found in it, but none are anterior to the fifth century B.C., and most belong to the latest period of the history of Motya. The last chapter is devoted to a long and fully illustrated description of the contents of the very interesting little museum which Mr. Whitaker has erected on the spot. (It may be worth noting that the ornamental basins illustrated in fig. 103 are probably thymiateria.)

To those who are fortunate enough to have visited the site, it will be clear that the writing of this book must have been a labour of love. The flat island, with a fresh breeze and a blue sky, with the poppies and the daisies in the corn, and the larks singing overhead, while Eryx towers up to landward, and the rugged outlines of the Aegades rise in the western sea—all this has an unforgettable charm. But the book is more than that—it is a conscientious record of continuous work and discovery, which makes us regret, as we must in many another case, the grave and indeed irreparable interruption to our studies which was the inevitable concomitant of the Great War. Its consequences are only now being felt at their worst in high prices everywhere; but we may be allowed to hope that Mr. Whitaker may find it possible to continue the researches which have already produced such important results.

DER BOGEN VON MALBORGHETTO (2 Abhandlung der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1915). By F. TÖBELMANN. $11\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$, xii + 46 pp., 1 portrait, 25 plates. RÖMISCHE ANTIKENGÄRTEN (4 Abhandlung, *id.*, 1917). By C. HÜLSEN. $11\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$, xvi + 136 pp. Heidelberg, Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung.

The importance of these two works must be my excuse for noticing them at all so long after their publication. The first dissertation brings forward an entirely convincing theory as to the locality of the battle of Saxa Rubra, in which Constantine defeated Maxentius. Grossi-Gondi,¹ following Nibby,² had independently arrived at the same conclusion; but Töbelmann's treatment of the subject from the point of view of strategy and tactics is masterly. Maxentius took up his position, according to this view, on the heights just north of Prima Porta (the post station of Ad Rubras, nine miles from Rome on the Via Flaminia, where the remains of the villa of Livia *ad Gallinas albas* have been found). This is the only site which satisfies the conditions laid down by our accounts of the battle: for we know that he had the Tiber in his rear, and that the ground was adapted for cavalry. Trusting in superior numbers, and wishing to make it impossible for his troops to give ground, he committed a fatal error, as it proved, in neglecting to secure his retreat, and, when a panic occurred, he was unable to retrieve the defeat, which turned into a disastrous rout, his army being pursued as far as the Pons Mulvius, where many of them perished in the river, the bridge itself and the pontoon bridge, which he had thrown over the river near it, proving quite inadequate.

Constantine, on the other hand, who had been advancing along the Via Flaminia, halted for the night at the place now known (from a medieval castle which once stood

¹ *Civiltà Cattolica*, 1912, iv, 386, *sqq.*

² *Analisi*, iii, 34, 41.